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A THEOSOPHICAL INTERVIEW

You have heard us say often enough on this program that Theosophy is for inquiring minds, for people who seek answers to basic questions of life and about living. Today I have with me in the studio such a questioner. As a representative of our growing body of listeners, he seems to typify those who would like answers to certain questions which we may have neglected. So I now ask him to start the ball rolling with a question.

Inquirer. Well, first of all, is Theosophy a new religion? Or a new cult? Just what is it? I believe I am asked that question more often than any other, and it rather stumps me.

Theosophist. It needn't, because the answer is quite simply "No". Theosophy is not a new religion because it is not a religion at all. So that disposes of the second part of your question also. If it is not a religion it cannot be any kind of a cult because the word "cult" means a "particular system of religious worship". "Then what is it?" you ask. It is the core, so to speak, of that body of wisdom which is common to all religions and to philosophy. It deals with the origins of life and form, and with the origin and progress of the human race. The word itself, Theosophy, was first used in the 3rd century A.D. in Alexandria by the Greek philosopher Iamblichus. He used the term to mean the inner knowledge concerning the things of God which were taught in the Greek Mysteries. Theosophy, then, is a word which signifies a knowledge of Brahman, the Absolute, God. This knowledge is found, in the east, in the Upanishads and Hindu philosophies, and, in the west in the philosophies of Pythagoras, Plato and other Greek philosophers; in ancient Egypt; and in certain teachings which are found to have existed in the early days of Christianity. Today, however, Theosophy means a body of philosophical ideas sponsored by Theosophists.

Inq. What you have just said seems to me to answer what I had in mind to ask next. It's this: Do Theosophists believe in God?

Theos. The answer of course is Yes. I think you will find Theosophists the most reverent of people. You know, observ-

atory astronomers will usually tell you that, living with the stars as they do, they cannot be atheists because they are in the presence of a majestic order when they scan the starry heavens, and that the evidence of a supreme Intelligence is overpowering. In the same way, we who make a serious study of Theosophy discover such a majestic sweep of life from the atom to the galaxies, from the animal to the superman, and from chaos to breath-taking beauty that we find it impossible to doubt either God as Immanent or God as Transcendent. Yes, Theosophists believe in God; in God the Creator, in God the Transformer, and in God the Preserver of the cosmic process.

Inq. Thank you. Now may I ask something further about your beliefs. You say there are no dogmas in Theosophy, and no creed. But surely you have certain ideas which are fundamental to your general concepts, do you not? Can you tell me what those are?

Theos. I'll try. We say we have no creed or dogma for the simple reason that we do not require any belief or conformity. You could not say, for instance, "John Jones is a Theosophist, therefore I know what he believes." Theosophy is a body of teaching, tremendous in scope but simple in principle, which is presented freely to the student. Out of that abundance each student selects that which for him is most illuminating and inspiring. There is no compulsion towards particular beliefs nor towards conformity.

Inq. I am aware of that and find it an essential reason for the freedom of thought and expression which seems to exist in the Society. But are there not certain ideas to which most Theosophists subscribe freely, ideas on which there seems to be a general accord?

Theos. I am sure that is true. One such idea would, I believe, have to do with cycles, and rhythm. It seems to be universally true that there are periods when activities begin, come to their maximum, and then diminish to be followed by a period of quietude. This is true of the season of a tree, of the life of a man, of the civilization of a nation or a continent, of a geological Age, of planets and the stars themselves.

Inq. And doesn't The Secret Doctrine say the same of the

whole universe? In other words that the rhythm of birth, maturity, decline and death followed again by rebirth, and so on, is a universal rhythm?

Theos. It does indeed. You may remember, too, that one of the famous aphorisms of ancient times was "As above, so below". Any natural law that applies to the highest levels applies to the lowest as well, and vice versa. Just begin to observe cycles, and you will see for yourself.

Inq. And rhythms too, wouldn't you say? We can observe rhythms in such various things as the pendulum, and the tides, in the phases of the moon and the seasons of the year.

Theos. And that makes it seem only natural and logical when Theosophy explains that there are rhythms and cycles involving our solar system and the whole visible universe.

Inq. Are other tenets of Theosophy as stimulating as this?

Theos. To me they are. There is, for example, the principle of agency, which also seems universally applicable. The Christian Bible tells of "Thrones, Powers, and Principalities", meaning high agencies of the Creator; and of Cherubim and Seraphim and angel messengers. These little understood titles refer to Intelligences which work at carrying out the divine scheme of things. Under different names they are recognized in all the great religions of the world. There are lesser degrees of agency down even to man himself. The innermost self of man is called "a spark from the Divine Flame" even while it is clothed in physical matter of the human body.

Inq. And "As above, so below" would apply to agency too, wouldn't it? For instance, an executive in industry has department head, agents abroad, foremen, and workers in the yards and factories. And then a king has his ministers and his nobles. He has ambassadors and couriers and even quite humble servants. And all his subjects who form his kingdom.

Theos. Excellent! Now you are answering the questions! I believe we have time for just one more question. What shall it be?

Inq. Might I just say something first? It occurs to me that part of the impressiveness of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth might be due to the fact that it symbolized, in a way, this whole idea of kingship and agency that we have been talking about.

Theos. I'm sure you are right, for the Coronation was a magnificent ritual. And every true ritual is a reflection on the earthly level of some activity on the divine level.

Inq. I had another question in mind to close with, but I'd rather go on with this "As above, so below" idea. Can you tell me another way in which Theosophists would apply it?

Theos. Well, take growth, for example. Growth is a property or attribute of every known thing, terrestrial or celestial. We were speaking a moment ago of the ever recurring cycle of birth, maturity, decline, and death. We agreed that we can watch that cycle right here in the seasons of a fruit tree. But each year, when the tree begins a new cycle, it is a bit larger than it was the year before. Each cycle begins in the same manner but at a stage of advance. Likewise, when a man begins a new cycle in his birth here, he begins it with a certain increase in wisdom and capacity over what prevailed at his previous birth into this world. Reincarnation is the method and mode of growth. We can say that the Roman Empire was reincarnated in the British Empire carrying over the love of law and order and the skill at colonization, but at a slightly higher level. Theosophy explains that even planetary life reincarnates -- that the whole Earth Scheme of life is a reincarnation (again on a slightly higher level) of the scheme which prevailed millions of years ago on the Moon.

And now to close. I might sum up all this by saying that Theosophists believe that since we, like everything else in the universe, are governed by natural, divine law, it is important to understand what the laws are and to try to live in harmony with them. Thank you so much for bringing up these points for the benefit of our listeners.

Inq. And thank you for the opportunity.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INVISIBLE

Our spiritual progress is involved more with the unseen factors in our lives than with those which we see. St. Paul said, "The things which are seen are temporal; the things which are unseen are eternal." We live in an everyday world of objects and we are accustomed to thinking that only what we can see or touch is real. However, if we consider, we'll quickly agree that there are tremendous factors swaying us all the time - factors which are completely unseen. Think for a moment of that powerful force known as Fashion. In the Western world there is a saying that one might as well be dead as out of fashion. Public opinion which insists on certain types of attire for certain positions in life, or for certain occasions, is an unseen force yet it is so strong that it dictates the conduct of millions and compels the expenditure of vast sums of money every year.

There are many examples of the force of unseen factors in our lives. Think of the force of patriotism, of superstition, of mob spirit, of racial prejudice. Such forces ride in on vast invisible waves of thought and feeling which invade us and compel us to action.

These however are not, probably, the unseen things of which St. Paul spoke. And we here are concerned rather with man's invisible side and his life in the unseen realms of nature. For man himself is an unseen entity. He is a soul and the greater part of him is the soul part, while the physical body in which he appears to us here is only a small part of him. In fact man resembles an iceberg in that the visible part is almost insignificant along side the part we do not see,

When the soul has departed from the body, what have we left? A marble-like statue, devoid of life. It was the unseen soul which made it alive, human, real, lovable, able to act. In India, where philosophical thinking is more the custom of the people than is usually so in the West, it is common to hear a man speak of "my body", his tone implying that he himself is the soul and that the body is but a possession. He does not say, "I am tired, I am hungry." Instead he says, "My body is tired. My body is hungry." The point of view is that the soul is the thinker, the speaker, the real person.

To Theosophists it seems that this is the true situation. Man is a soul. He has a physical body, and later we shall see that he has other bodies, too.

St. Paul spoke of a man as having a natural body and also a spiritual body. To go further in this distinction which St. Paul makes between two of man's bodies, we find in Theosophy detailed description of four of man's bodies. There is first the causal body - the soul's permanent vesture which he keeps and wears during all the long series of lives on earth and in the rest periods between these lives.

After the finest robing of causal matter, man's next coarser body is formed of mental stuff and its particles can respond to vibrations of thought. In and through this he can make thought pictures and by his will send them out into the mind-stuff about him, broadcasting his own mental messages. Some times those who are in tune pick up these silent thought-messages. And then we speak of telepathy.

The next coarser body is made of emotional matter - tuned to respond to emotional stimuli and capable of setting up in itself its own emotional impulses and sending them broadcast through the surrounding emotional stuff and into the emotional veillings of others. Feelings often are picked up. Suddenly we may be pervaded by a feeling of sadness - we know not why. Shortly we learn that one near to us - or in tune with us - has a heavy worry, or a sorrow. We have picked up this message of feeling.

The physical body which we have known since this time of birth, is the heavy covering - a sort of diving suit - in which we may roam this dense realm of matter. In this we learn the skills of contacting and manipulating matter. Physical matter. As a soul approaches birth, then, it draws about itself veils of these types of matter in order to be prepared to live on earth. At the time which we call death, the process is reversed and the soul drops, one after another, these three robes which have been so useful in living. Without the mental body he could not have known the world of thought and ideas; without an emotional body no feelings of love, anger, fear, and joy would have been experienced. Without the physical body he could not pick

up, handle, and shape earthly matter into the many wonderful things which his mind has been able to conceive in mental imagery, and which his joy in achievement has spurred him to bring into physical actuality.

At death man leaves his physical body first - leaves it lying empty and suddenly strange-looking to us, since the tenant has gone away from it. One young man who was confined in an iron lung for many months and whose life was despaired of by his nurses, asked his doctor one day, "Is it true? Am I going to become invisible?" You see he had the point of view of which we have been speaking: not that death ends life but that it was the beginning of a life invisible to us here. Any idea that he might die - end - become nothing was completely foreign to him but it was logical to him that if his body was hopelessly diseased and useless, he might leave it and become invisible for the time to his family and friends, while he himself continued his life in other worlds.

At so-called death the man is alive and active in all his other bodies but has no longer a physical envelope with which to contact us through our physical senses.

Each of the bodies of man is capable of developing its own set of senses and will do so in the course of evolution, as each body becomes organized. For we are to learn to live consciously in and deal with the invisible worlds, and the development of these invisible parts of our nature is a great task lying ahead. When we have learned to be self-directed and fully conscious in these invisible worlds, a whole new point of view comes which changes even our actions in this physical world. For one thing we come then to view death not as the end of living but as a doorway into fuller life where one is actually freer, more alive, and closer to reality than ever we can be here and now.

We become possessed of a new set of values. We act from a new center - an eternal center. We begin to live more and more from the invisible levels of our nature.

To many of us all this knowledge of the invisible worlds is still largely a matter of faith, and yet there is much that makes it a matter of logic and reason, while every day

science is giving new evidence concerning man's life in the invisible worlds. Man's ability to remain himself after death, man's life during sleep, the possibility of his gaining new information while in the sleep state - many such topics are convincingly discussed in books of unquestioned scientific merit. There is the monumental but fascinating work of F. W. H. Myers, one of the group of scientists of which Darwin was a brilliant member. Myers wrote HUMAN PERSONALITY AND ITS SURVIVAL OF DEATH, a book which should be sought eagerly by any who have a fear that death ends all of life. And there is the little book written in 1950 by Edwin Schrodinger, of Dublin University faculty, who was a co-worker with Einstein before both had to flee their homeland. In his WHAT IS LIFE he reaches the conclusion that man is immortal. This man is no religious visionary: He is a physicist of the first rank. There is also the marvelous book by J. W. Dunn called AN EXPERIMENT IN TIME. Here again a scientist finds that the evidence will not allow one to escape the conclusion that man is immortal. Dunn is one of Britain's eminent aeronautical engineers. He designed her first military plane in World War II. He decided that not only does man live forever but that in his dream life he is at work in the future. A group of young Oxford students cooperated with him in experiments which are thrilling reading and rigidly scientific.

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There were, and are, those/Theosophical fields of work who have investigated the finer fields of consciousness through developing and using their own subtler senses. They have written of what they experienced. You may read of all this in the Theosophical literature. They checked and re-checked to be sure that what they saw and heard and learned was accurately reported. And they all insist that what they have to tell us should be treated as mere hypotheses until we ourselves can corroborate them. But the usefulness of the information they obtained is above price. To test by reason and observed action the lines of conduct their experiments indicate, is to achieve at once a happier more satisfactory life. Thus man can come alive in the finer worlds as the butterfly slowly emerges from the chrysalis, and like the butterfly, man will soar and sun in these lovelier realms. It is for all of us in the future. The way is marked. Let us seek it out - NOW .

MAN'S ETHERIC DOUBLE

Now that humanity is becoming so accustomed to radio, television and A-bombs as subjects of conversation, I thought it might be interesting to study with you, in a theosophical sense, the material of nature which makes these things possible. For radio, television and the A-bomb all function through the etheric matter which belongs to our planet. This however, is NOT the so-called Aether of Space, which science postulated for a time. The ether to which I am referring is invisible physical matter, which has four grades of density.

Man's body contains solids, liquids, gases and ether, which latter is mostly unknown. Theosophy explains that the physical body is completely interpenetrated by a well organized etheric body called the ETHERIC DOUBLE composed of four grades of ether. Science recognizes the lowest and heaviest grade of ether through which radio functions, and is now dealing with atomic fission in the finest grade which is made up of ultimate physical atoms. These latter are the atoms which science has learned how to smash. Just recently TIME Magazine's science page had an article on THE HEART OF THE ATOM, showing that investigators " had found more space in the nucleus of the atom's heart than anyone had guessed.. that though the center of the nucleus is 130 trillion times denser than water, its edge thins down to cottony fluff. New theories of the nucleus must be developed to explain (these) discoveries. They look forward to probing still deeper into the atom...and may well probe to the innermost limits of matter." Theosophy suggests that what the scientific investigators call the "innermost limits of matter" is but the stage at which the ultimate physical atoms, which comprise the most rarified ether, can be broken up into aggregations of ASTRAL MATTER. This means moving out of the three dimensional space of our ordinary consciousness into four dimensional space, with inconceivably bewildering possibilities.

In man, the four grades of ether combine to form what is called the etheric double, the body of etheric matter which interpenetrates his dense physical body. This invisible part of the physical body is of great importance to us, for it is the vehicle through which flow the streams of vitality

which keep the body alive. It serves also as a bridge between psychological man and his physical vehicle or body. Without this "bridge", man's thoughts and feelings could not be conveyed to his brain - the inner, egoic man could not use the cells of his physical instrument, the brain.

The etheric double is clearly visible to the clairvoyant as a mass of faintly luminous violet-gray mist, interpenetrating the dense body and extending slightly beyond it. It has been seen even with ordinary physical sight aided by special slides, or screens, as reported in the book THE HUMAN ATMOSPHERE by Dr. W.J. Kilner, whose investigations agree quite accurately with those made by clairvoyance. The etheric counterpart, being only a finer part of the physical body, has no separate consciousness of its own, but does seem to have a vague, diffused awareness and it does serve as a bridge between the dense body and Nature's finer forces.

The life of the dense physical body, being one of perpetual change, needs constant supply from three different sources to keep it in condition: food, water, and air. So also the etheric body: it needs constant replacement of etheric particles. These are taken in along with the food eaten, the air breathed, and the vitality absorbed. Now vitality is essentially a force, an energy which emanates from the sun. When this particular form of energy is clothed with matter "it appears like highly refined chemical elements" which are called "vitality globules".

Of the three forms of energy which the body needs, one in particular is called "Prana", a sanskrit word meaning "the Life-Principle". Prana is one aspect of the Life-Force of the Logos, the Deity, sent through the transforming powerhouse of the sun into the atmosphere of our planet. It is absorbed by all living organisms, as it seems to be a necessity for their existence. It does not produce life, it IS life: and the living animal and plant forms are its products. It is the integrating energy which co-ordinates the physical molecules and cells and holds them together as a definite, precise organism. Were it not for the Prana there could be no physical body working as an integrated whole. There might be a collection of independent cells, but the spiritual egos who wish to manifest in the physical world, could not use such an assortment of unconnected

materials. It is the Prana or Life-Force which links up the elements into one complete whole, "playing along the meshes of the 'life-web', that shimmering golden web of inconceivable fineness and delicate beauty, formed out of a single thread of buddhic or unifying matter, into the meshes of which the coarser atoms are built together".

Too much of this Life-Force in the nervous system may lead to disease and death, just as too little leads to exhaustion and death. It has, therefore, much to do with health, healing, and creative stimuli. This Life-Force works on all planes of which anything is known, on feeling, on emotion, mentality, unity, spirituality. There is a great deal of information about Prana in theosophical books, but today we are concerned with its work in the Etheric Double, although there are so many fascinating details about this little known part of ourselves, that it would take several talks to tell you about them.

As the "double" is a counterpart of the physical form, every nerve is encased in etheric matter which acts as a conductor for the flow of Prana, thus feeding every cell and atom in the body, the bones, the blood, the muscles and glands. The Prana which is the general Life-Force, specializes itself for use in our bodies. "There are seven different kinds of Prana, colored violet, blue, green, yellow, orange, dark-red and rose-red. Radiating from the sun into the earth's atmosphere, Prana enters some of the ultimate physical atoms which float about in the atmosphere in countless myriads, and causes them to glow. Such an atom charged with this additional Life has a six-fold power of attraction and at once draws to itself six other atoms. This combination is called the Vitality Globule".

Mr. Leadbeater says: "The Vitality Globule, though inconceivably minute, is so brilliant that it is often seen even by those who are not at all clairvoyant...By looking toward the sky at the horizon, especially over the ocean, one can see a number of the tiniest possible points of light dashing about in all directions with amazing rapidity". These are vitality globules each containing seven etheric atoms, capable of breaking up into seven colors, under the law of vibratory attraction.

When these vitality globules enter the body through the spleen, as they do, they separate into their component parts or atoms, each charged with one of the seven colors, and flow towards the part of the body which they serve. The yellow atoms flow to the heart, the blue-violet to the throat, the green to the digestive system, and the rose-red to the nervous system. These rose-red atoms are the life of the nervous system and are the originals which are first charged with Prana and which magnetically attract the other six atoms. As they sweep along the nerves, feeding them their Pranic life-force, they very gradually grow paler. They are eventually discharged from the body through the pores of the skin and form what is called the "health aura", a bluish-white emanation.

In a man of vigorous health the spleen may absorb more Prana than it can use. In that case, the unused particles, still rosy and vigorous, are discharged from his body through the health aura and remain in that aura so that he is a source of healing to those around him. On the other hand, a man who has an inadequate supply of Prana often saps the vitality of those around him, and is, himself, restless, irritable, and unduly sensitive to noise. Sunshine and the vigorous air of mountain or seashore are very beneficial in such cases.

The vegetable kingdom also absorbs Prana, and some trees, especially the pine and eucalyptus, discharge superfluous rose-red atoms just as human beings do. That is why the proximity of those particular trees is found to be healing in cases of nervous depletion.

Etheric matter responds readily to both thoughts and feelings. Positive and joyous thoughts attract an inflow of Prana, life-force, into the human system. Negative and gloomy thoughts and emotions seem actually to prohibit the inflow. Herein lies the key to much of our modern mental healing. Theosophy recognizes such healing and explains its rationale by describing the Etheric Double and the forces which play through it to maintain the physical body.

THE SCIENCE OF THE AURA

One of the most interesting branches of occult science is that concerned with the Aura. Speaking concisely, the aura is a subtle magnetic emanation from a being or an object. Everything in nature generates its own aura, atmosphere, or magnetism. Each human being moves in a magnetic field which is his aura: it radiates from him as solar rays emanate from the sun.

The human aura partakes of the essential qualities of the person, of his etheric, emotional, mental, and spiritual forces. In a vital sense each human being creates his own magnetic atmosphere which, in turn, reveals his temperament, disposition, character, and even condition of health.

Now I can hear you asking, "Is there any scientific proof of the existence of the human aura?". Yes, there is. Its existence has been proven in various ways. For example, when the aura is charged with high potential electricity a neon lamp brought within its influence lights up. This illumination occurs in a clearly defined area around the body. There is a definite line of demarkation between the area which causes the neon gas to glow and the area which does not. The line may be some inches from the body in one part and some feet away in another. Traceable by the same lamp may be rays projected in a straight line for a distance of five or six feet. In this way it is possible to make a definite mapping-out of the aura of a person.

This auric emanation has long been known to scientists and to occult science. It is the "magnetism" of Mesmer, the "electric fluid" of Jussieu, the "odyle flames" of Reichenbach, the "exteriorized sensibility" of de Rochas, and the "vital rays" of Dr. Baraduc. And from the most ancient times clairvoyance has testified to this subtle emanation.

The "halo" around the head of a saint is no poetical fiction. Sometimes this halo, not restricted to the head, has been shown surrounding the whole body like a misty cloud, or luminosity. We are told that when Moses came down from the Mount with the stone tablets, his face so "shone" that people could not gaze at it. Here is ancient testimony to this aura lit up by the infinite power of Spirit.

As each sun has its planets revolving around it, so each form, however minute, is surrounded by still smaller centers of energy emanating from the common center and partaking of the qualities of that center. For instance, copper, carbon and arsenic send out auras of red; lead and sulphur send out blue auric colors; gold, silver, and antimony green; and iron shows all the colors of the spectrum. Plants and animals are similarly surrounded by colors according to their innate characteristics.

One who is not clairvoyant may yet sense the actuality of the aura by an awareness of the strange quality which some people with strong, forceful characters carry about with them. The very force of their personalities seems to radiate from them. After all, the aura is merely an extension of the personality which can both give and receive impressions quite apart from the physical senses. One may feel an instinctive attraction or repulsion for a person or thing which seems unreasonable; nevertheless the attraction or repulsion speaks loudly of an intrinsic harmony or disharmony between the auras.

The explanation of the human aura is found in the structure of man. The three bodies, or psychological vehicles of man are: (1) the etheric or bridge-body connecting the physical and emotional parts of man; (2) the astral or emotional body; and (3) the mental body. They form this aura. These three bodies, or zones, overlap. The etheric body extends a little beyond the edge of the physical body and makes the inner aura, sometimes called the "health aura". The astral body, with its egg-shaped form, extends further, making up the second aura. And the mental body, radiating still further, forms the outer aura. To these may be added the spiritual vehicle of man, but this really belongs to a different order of consciousness even though it does show itself through one's aura. In some people of devout, unselfish, mystical type the spiritual aura is very definite, pronounced and beautiful, while in others of animal-like nature there is no vestige of it.

This atmosphere round each person varies in many ways. It varies according to the individual's disposition and character. It is modified by the play of emotions, passions, and feelings which give to it a definite color tone. It

is also an unfailing guide to health conditions. In sound health the vital rays or forces stream into the surrounding atmosphere with a clear brilliance. In poor health the color tone is gray and dull; and disease is indicated by nebulous spots or patches over the part of the physical body affected. Thus you can see that our actual condition and our true character are "photographed" on our auras, and that what we really are may be quite different from what we seem to be. This accounts for the sense of attraction or repulsion we often feel in meeting people for the first time. The invisible play of their auras persuades us before a word is spoken.

Now of course all this is not a new discovery. The idea of an emanation surrounding the human body is probably as old as human tradition. We find mention of the aura among the writings of the ancients. For example, the Books of Hermes, the sacred books of the Egyptians, allude to it, and the works of oriental philosophers support the idea. In the west the writings of Paracelsus and Van Helmont confirmed the ancient teachings. Paracelsus was one of the first western scholars to discuss at length the theory of the Astral Body, to teach that around the physical body extends an invisible radiation or "fiery globe".

In 1734 came the birth of Anton Mesmer. I know his name is familiar to all of you. He was a doctor of medicine who specialized in the subject of magnetism and the little understood forces which emanate from steel plates and magnets. He was much impressed by the experiments and magnetic healing of the Jesuit priest, Father Hehl. Following out the Paracelsian law of "correspondences" and anticipating the modern theory of the electro-magnetic basis of life, Mesmer discovered that effects could be brought about by the emanations flowing from the human hand. He called them "animal magnetic fluid" or "animal magnetism". Their use was later called "Mesmerism" in his honor.

One of the foremost experimental scientists to follow him in this line was Baron von Reichenbach who announced in 1845 his discovery of a radiation from certain objects which he called "odic force" or the "odylic flames". He said that it was generated by certain crystals, by magnets, and by the human body and that it could be seen by the naked eye. His "odylic light" and the auric clouds were later photographed.

Then, a few years before the first World War, further scientific light was thrown on the subject of the aura. A remarkable book called THE HUMAN ATMOSPHERE was written by Dr. W.J.Kilner, medical electrician at St. Thomas' Hospital in London. In this book Dr. Kilner discussed his discovery of a method whereby the human atmosphere, or aura, could be observed by anyone. That marked a new era for the subject because it gave people an opportunity really to see the aura for themselves, and that was what they wanted. With many of us seeing is believing, is it not?

Dr. Kilner built a screen to exclude some of the light rays and to bring into visibility the ultra-violet rays by using an alcoholic solution of decyanid, a coal tar dye. By use of this screen, or slide, to observe a person standing against a black background in a dimly lighted room, Dr. Kilner and his associates found that every person so studied was entirely surrounded by a faint, luminous, colorful mist extending about eighteen inches to two feet in all directions from the periphery of the body. They saw, also, that this cloudy emanation varied daily in shape and clearness, and that it appeared fainter and more obscure in illness. Some think that Dr. Kilner was a natural clairvoyant and that his experiments with decyanin were merely the means that led to the development of his clairvoyance. In any case, he saw the auras. That is the important thing!

Again, Raoul de Fleuriere in May, 1926, gave a lecture at the International Metaphysical Institute in Paris. He reported that, in his opinion, the emanation of every individual is so personal to himself that it cannot be confounded with that of anyone else. It is like fingerprints in this respect. He said that by its very essence it radiates the person's character -- his passions, habits, ideas, aspirations, and all that makes up his psychological and even biological existence.

A study of this subject is important to us as leading to an understanding of the basic human organism on the inner side leading to an understanding of ourselves as we affect each other day by day, under all living conditions. Often we are quite unconscious of our effect upon others. We can, however, learn to raise this effect to a higher, more constructive, and even more spiritual level.

THEOSOPHY GIVES PURPOSE TO LIVING

Theosophy shows that life has both meaning and purpose. It offers an explanation of life that is both reasonable and practical. To those who have become indifferent, or hopeless, or cynical, its message is invaluable.

Theosophy tells of a definite scheme of life on our planet which functions through changeless laws and under intelligent direction. Because we have each our own unique place in this scheme, we live under these laws. And if we give attention to the discovering of these laws, we learn how to work with them and to make our lives happier thereby.

But Theosophy does more than explain these great laws and principles under which we live. It reveals to us our own divine nature. Let us see how it is that we may discover this divinity within ourselves.

If we were able to take a bird's-eye view of the scheme of life, we would see that the One Life of the Creator, the One Supreme Intelligence, has found expression in countless forms since the beginning of Creation -- that "The One has become the Many" -- while remaining Itself changeless, immutable. We would see this scheme of life as something dynamic, something flowing in a majestic order according to the Plan in the mind of the Creator. We would know that the Great Intelligence not only could conceive such a mighty plan, but can carry it to its completion. We would see that all civilizations and all races of man have been channels for this One Life; and we would discover that every religion and every philosophy has had something definite to teach about It and also has something definite to contribute to the pattern.

Because this plan includes everything that has ever existed or ever will exist, we see ourselves therein as part of the total purpose. Our small lives are part of the great plan. And we come to recognize one very important factor in human knowledge, namely that everything that lives is part of the one whole, has come from the one divine Source. Literally everything contains a fragment of divinity. And life is the process by which divinity is released into expression.

We might think of life as a drama in which we have each a

part to play, a part which we must play in spite of ourselves. Therefore it follows that if we want to be happy in life -- and we do want to be happy -- we must learn to play this part as was intended. This means that we need to learn to act in harmony with our fellow players, to find the right relationship of our own lives to those other lives which have also a part in the drama. And so we come to the study of Theosophy, for Theosophy is, among other things, a study in relationships. The more we learn, the more truly we see our own part in its relation to the other parts. And it becomes obvious that we need to learn to live in harmony with our fellow men. A knowledge of the real meaning of Brotherhood will help us to do this.

First of all, Brotherhood is not an idea which The Theosophical Society originated. Brotherhood was a fact in nature before ever there was a Theosophical Society; and neither your opinions concerning it nor my own can in any way affect this immutable truth -- Brotherhood IS A FACT in nature. Remember, we are all in this stream of life together. What affects one affects all, in some measure. If we hurt one brother, all are in a degree injured. If we help one brother, all are in a degree helped.

We know that any group of things coming from one source are related. Even magazine articles dealing with the same subject are called related articles. Children of the same family are related. And all life coming from the One Creator is related life, and the term which best expresses this relationship is Brotherhood.

In a family there are children of different ages at different stages of development. In life there are souls of different ages at different stages of development. In the family the older child who has had more experience passes along his understanding to help his younger brother, and both look up to their parents for help. And so it is in this brotherhood of life. Those souls who have had more experience, through more lives on earth, use their greater wisdom to help their younger brothers, and all in turn look up to spiritual leaders, those Great Brothers sometimes called the Elder Brethren of Humanity, who have completed their human evolution and are ever ready to teach and inspire humanity. They, like us, are sons of the One Father, brothers. There is always this giving and receiving of help. We could make no progress

without living in some degree a life of brotherliness.

Another of the tenets of Theosophy which will help us to take our part well in this drama of life is that of reincarnation. Reincarnation is thought of as the small cycles within the great cycle of evolution through which all mankind moves in order to learn the use of mental, emotional, and physical matter. There is so much in modern literature corroborating this theory that it would seem unnecessary to explain it at this time. Let me just bring you this from the writings of Irving Cooper, a Fellow of The Theosophical Society:

"The soul, or conscious self of man, is a growing thing, and its development from its first awakening to the gaining of its splendid maturity is extended over an enormous period of time, measured in tens of thousands of years. The soul is perfect at the beginning of its human experience only in the same sense that a seed is perfect, for there is as much difference relatively between a young soul and an old soul as there is between an acorn and an oak."

So you see, a young soul will go through all kinds of experiences in life before attaining to the wisdom of an old soul. The soul's purpose is to gain wisdom and to make active use of its soul powers. To accomplish this it sends fragments of itself into incarnation at different times to be its instrument and to gain experience. We are those fragments in incarnation now. We are representing our own ego, or soul, no matter how often we lose touch. We are the ones who are learning through those experiences.

Theosophists consider reincarnation a process in education. Modern educators advocate the non-directive method of guidance. Knowing that the mind of a young child must not be forced into grooves made for it by an adult, they surround a kindergarten child with various kinds of materials to use in his own way to make his own patterns. Actually, this non-directive method is the method of soul-education through reincarnation. We have always learned by the experimental method. We are surrounded by materials which we must learn to use and conditions under which must learn to work. We have made many mistakes, but we have learned through the mistakes we made. This education has proceeded slowly. It has taken us long ages to arrive at our present stage in ev-

olution.

But we do progress. If we learn our lessons in one lifetime we move on to others. If not, we find that we are given the same lessons over and over - as in school - until we do learn. Through different experiences and different environments we are given the same lessons, and until we do learn them our education will continue to be slow.

Until a miracle happens! Suddenly we seem awake and aware! We have attained an understanding that we ARE that reincarnating ego. We have begun to realize our own eternity, and our whole attitude towards life changes. We no longer resent circumstances in our lives, no longer lay the blame on others for unpleasantnesses in which we are involved. We see that everything which comes to us, whether at the moment we may consider it good or bad, has its educational value for us as growing souls. We realize that reincarnation IS a process of education and we WANT that education.

Then we become like a college student who knows exactly what he wants and takes the courses which will help him in his chosen profession. He studies, not because he must study, but because he is eager to learn. He wants to make every moment count.. Somewhat as a college student knows what career he will follow, so an older soul begins to glimpse what his activity will be in the days of his greatness -- that of an artist, a philosopher, an executive, or a scientist -- and he accepts without quarrel whatever is expected of him in training. We say he has become philosophical.

And so with us, whatever our soul age. We resolve to waste no opportunity and we stop drawing the line between what may be difficult or easy, what may be pleasant or unpleasant. We welcome ALL experiences because we know that it is only through them that we can learn.

Having discovered that we are souls, that we partake of divinity, we begin to use the powers of the soul. We find that we can initiate thought as well as action thus CREATING harmony. We can live in harmony with our fellow men and do a better job of playing our own part in the drama of life. Theosophy has given purpose to living.

THE DHARMA OF FREEDOM

Of all the influences to which man is subject, that of ideas is perhaps the most important. What we think and what other people think continually influence our behaviour, our attitudes, and frequently our achievements. Today, at this juncture in world history, we are aware of a conflict of ideas, ideas which stand, on the one hand, for the direction of western civilization and, on the other, for opposition to that direction. But this is a time too when there is not only a conflict of ideas, but also a meeting of ideas, for we are coming to know other parts of the world, particularly the East, better than we ever have before. And we are finding that there also, ideas are expressed which equally influence people's lives, attitudes, conduct, and goals.

Now what are these ideas? What concepts seem to us in the West so important that, no matter what the price, we will not give them up? Think of the words we use to express what is to us the essence of western civilization, words like democracy, liberty, justice, civil rights, and political rights. Are these not all parts of one big idea, aspects of an idea which sums up the whole meaning of western civilization, the idea of freedom? We may each have a different definition of freedom but we all agree that it is important, and basic to life. Yes, we say, there must be freedom for each individual, freedom for all, for man is not happy until he is free. If man has freedom then he has unlimited opportunity to gain anything else that he may want. So, freedom first. And that idea has been our contribution to the world of thought.

In the East there has been another idea. An idea just as important, just as basic to the shaping of eastern thought and action as the idea of freedom has been to the shaping of western thought. But we are just coming to be aware of it. That is the idea of Dharma. Dharma is a sanskrit word not easily translated into English; but an understanding of it is extremely important to us in the West. Sometimes Dharma is translated as "duty", sometimes as "responsibility", but fundamentally it is a matter of right relationship. It has also been defined as an interior command for the fulfillment of one's life, and that of course depends upon right relationship with others and the world,

and right relationship between one's personal rights and personal obligations. However variously interpreted and defined the concept of Dharma assumes that there is an inner law of being: to act according to that law is desirable, moral and conducive to fulfillment, or happiness; but to act against it is undesirable, immoral, and ends in frustration. It is possible to discover this law of our being, "our Dharma", by acting according to the dictates of our best self, or conscience. So we may say that Dharma is the law of our best being.

Now here are the two great ideas of the West and the East: Freedom and Dharma. And they are not in conflict. The student of Theosophy comes to see how they may complement and supplement each other so that there emerges a great unifying idea, the idea of rights and duty, and of freedom and obligations, a sort of universal "noblesse oblige" -- in other words, the Dharma of Freedom. This union of two great ideas from the East and the West can be of tremendous significance in world history.

We remember the epoch-making statement a few years ago of the Four Freedoms. To the student of Theosophy, aware of the multiple nature of man, these had a particular import, for they are related to the four aspects of man. The freedom from want is a physical freedom. Freedom from fear is an emotional freedom. Freedom of speech is mental freedom, and freedom of worship is spiritual freedom. Let us see how these four freedoms are affected by the idea of Dharma.

Man, as a purely physical, working, social unit has virtually achieved his independence, and we no longer fear physical slavery. But it is a difficult task to bring about that physical "freedom from want" on the one hand, and right relationships between individuals and between groups, on the other. Physical freedom means freedom of action, and this is practicable only in a society in which not only rights but obligations are recognized. And what is that but a recognition of Dharma? For the discovery of one's dharma is a particular situation means the finding of a way of life or mode of conduct which would be in consonance with the dictates of one's best self. In terms of physical freedom this means the duty of doing one's work well, recognized equally with the right of having work to do. Instead of a freedom of

action which exclaims "I against the world!" there is a new freedom which proclaims "I and the world". He who stands against the world demands fullest freedom without any limitations whatever, while he who stands with the world seeks freedom for all, knowing that only as all are free can he be truly free. Such a man is guided by the law of his best self, dharma. So a freedom of action and a dharma of action are expressed and recognized.

For students of Theosophy, freedom at the emotional level is a direct outgrowth of an understanding of two great teaching: reincarnation and karma. Many of us remember the sudden sense of freedom and joy with which we first realized that we are eternally growing creatures; that as we worked today, so should we reap tomorrow; that it was never too late to learn, nor we too old to begin to learn something new; that our weaknesses could be overcome; and that all which seemed unfair in our lives and the lives of others was, after all, beautifully just and according to law. So did understanding, a knowledge of reincarnation and karma, bring us a much needed emotional freedom from fear and resentment. And the dharma of freedom at this level means that when we no longer fear the limitations in our own lives, we no longer fear the rights of others. Emotional freedom unseals the springs of love within our nature; and, attuned to the law of our best selves, our dharma, we are truly free to be friends with all men, to help all men.

The forces abroad in the world today which would enslave mankind are those which would subdue his mind and deny his liberty as a free-thinking, free-choosing individual. There are many evidences of this new struggle: the influence of propaganda of all kinds, all the way from aggressive interference with mental freedom down to high pressure advertising. Here again Theosophy makes a significant contribution for it points the way to freedom for men's minds. In that portion of its literature which is devoted to a struggle for freedom from religious limitation and from scientific dogmatism -- the outstanding reference being Theosophy's magnum opus, THE SECRET DOCTRINE, by H. P. Blavatsky -- the ideas there presented liberate the mind. Only when the mind is free can there be true freedom of speech. Yet once more the idea of dharma enters in, for we are reminded by the law of our best selves that to have true freedom of

speech, our words must never be used to bring injury or pain to another.

The ideal of free speech is the free exchange of opposing ideas, that new ideas may emerge therefrom. Let groups, classes, and nations differ as they will in open, honest difference, without rancour but with respect for the opposing viewpoint, and the conference table WILL replace the battlefield. The word "freedom" suggests an objective. The word "dharma" suggests an ideal. When the two are combined a high goal is set for mankind.

The great and final freedom is achieved in the liberation of the spirit of man. Here is truly the spiritual frontier of freedom, an uncharted land the boundaries of which extend to include all living things. For freedom is not an escape from something; it is a liberation into a fuller life which all may share.

And in what does that liberation consist? In the perfect awareness that dharma, perfectly fulfilled, leads to utter freedom; in the recognition that the true authorities are within, not without; that the disciplines of the spirit are the keys to freedom; and that in perfect freedom is perfect service, the fulfillment of self in the service of all. To point the way, Mme. Blavatsky has written in THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE:

"Thus saith the sage -- Shalt thou abstain from action? Not so shall thy soul gain her freedom. To reach Nirvana one must reach SELF knowledge, and self knowledge is of loving deeds the child. Have patience, candidate, as one who fears no failure, courts no success. Fix thy Soul's gaze upon the Star whose ray thou art.....But bend thy head and listen well....compassion speaks and saith...Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry? Nay, O candidate, those gifts and powers are not for self."

So, our final freedom achieved, we turn, because it is the inner command for the fulfillment of life, to bring peace to the troubled heart, understanding to the questioning mind, harmony to our surroundings, and love to all beings. This is the dharma of freedom, and in us are met the great ideas of the West and the East.

